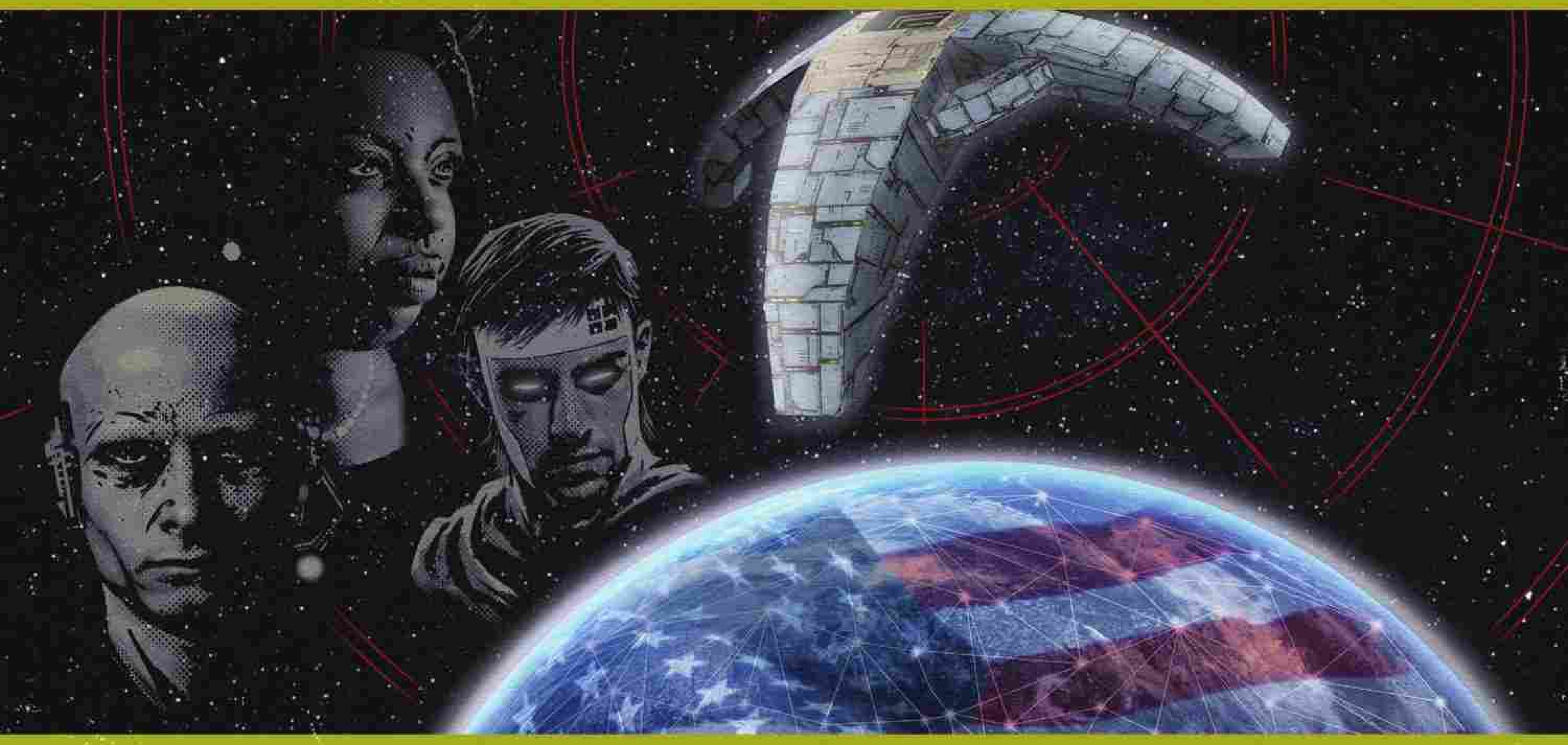
"Chilling and plausible." —METAHUMAN POLICY REVIEW

FINAL EXPLOSIVE ISSUE

Waller vs. Wildstorm



Book Four

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Waller vs. Wildstorm

BOOK FOUR

WRITERS
Spencer Ackerman & Evan Narcisse

PENCILLER & INKS (1-7, 27-32)
Jesús Merino

INKS (8-26)
Vicente Cifuentes

COLORS
Michael Atiyeh

LETTERS
Dave Sharpe

COVER
Jorge Fornés

VARIANT COVER
Eric Battle & Ulises Arreola

1:25 VARIANT COVER
Álvaro Martínez Bueno

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FREE PAROUSIA.
TERRITORY UNCONQUERED BY THE REPUBLIC OF GAMORRA.

GAMORRA CITY–For generations, long before the rise of Kaizen Gamorra or his alliance with Washington, Parousian warriors' greatest weapon was the land itself.

Invaders and tyrants might hold the coastline of the island formerly known as Parousia. But conquering it would require them to fight through the triple-canopied jungle of the island's interior–and then up a fortified mountain range.

The map outlined a geography of power. Kaizen accepted ruling the shore and the bay. But his inability to subdue the interior limited his ambitions for his renamed "Republic of Gamorra."

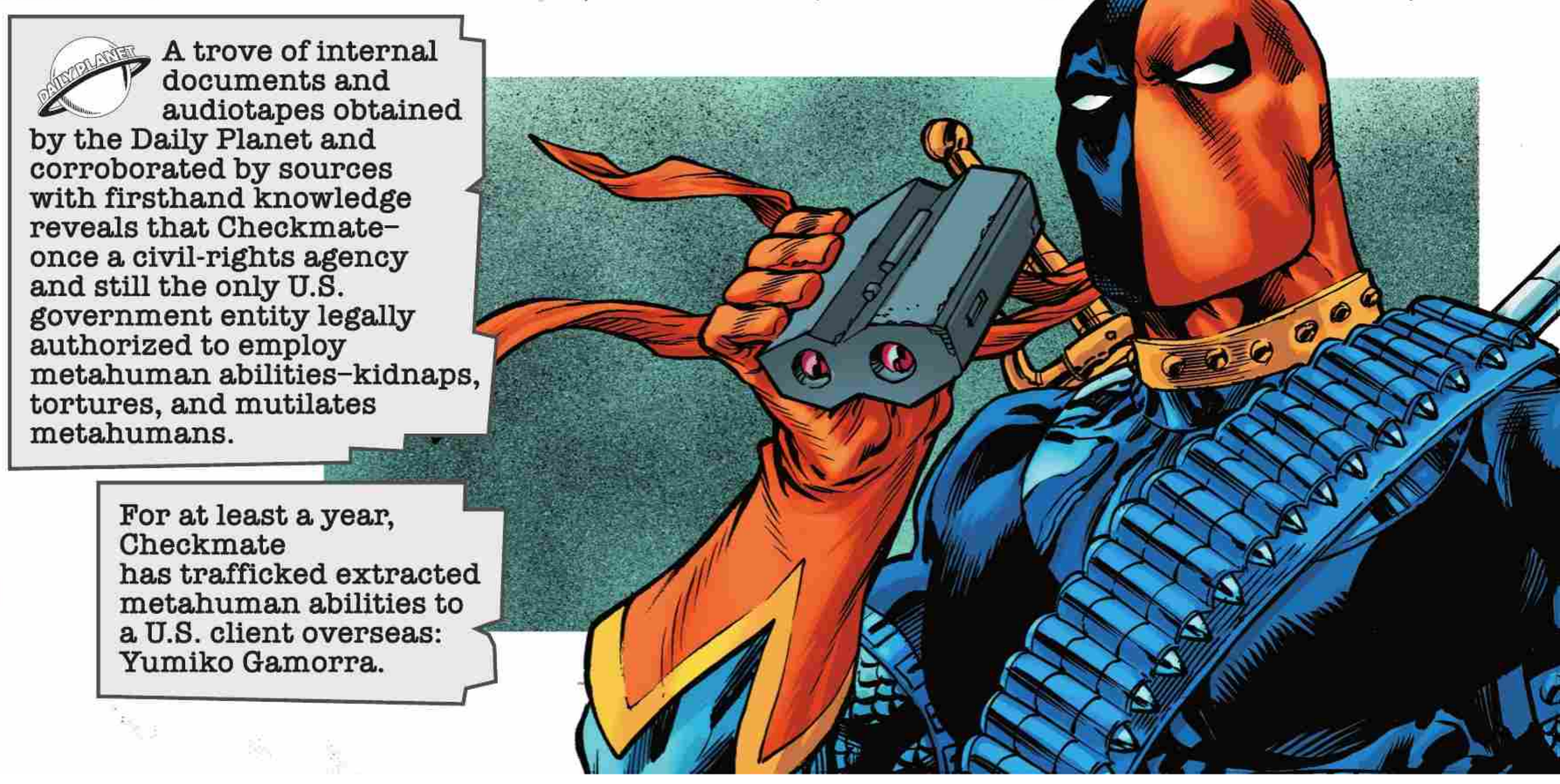
Kaizen Gamorra's daughter and successor, Yumiko, is even more ambitious. Her agenda–to develop Gamorra into a regional power-house–is shared by her benefactor: the United States.

So are her frustrations.

In a recent interview, the masked guerrilla general known as Rong warned that this geography will doom the presidency of her declared enemy, Yumiko Gamorra.

"Parousia belongs to whomever Parousia shelters," she told The Daily Planet, "and Parousia devours whomever Parousia exposes."

But Rong and her Parousian Liberation Army could not have anticipated that Yumiko, aided by the U.S. intelligence agency Checkmate, could make the land betray them.


DAILY PLANET
A trove of internal documents and audiotapes obtained by the Daily Planet and corroborated by sources with firsthand knowledge reveals that Checkmate–once a civil-rights agency and still the only U.S. government entity legally authorized to employ metahuman abilities–kidnaps, tortures, and mutilates metahumans.
For at least a year, Checkmate has trafficked extracted metahuman abilities to a U.S. client overseas: Yumiko Gamorra.

The files show that Checkmate dispatched a special operations team to El Salvador to capture Ignacio Rivas, an eight-year-old boy rumored to control jungle growth.

An after-action report refers to the presence of surgeons from Checkmate's medical staff. There is no record of the boy's whereabouts.

A source familiar with such operations told the Daily Planet that a Checkmate subcontractor located in Gamorra, Cupertino Human Resources, specializes in the surgical extraction and implantation of metahuman abilities.

DAILY PLANET

Most important of all to Checkmate's plans for Gamorra was a young woman named Ivana Baiul.

Ivana Baiul was trafficked into CHR and coerced into implanting its Cybernary enhancement.
As Cybernary, Baiul was made strong, fast, and uncommonly agile.

Operating through a contractor, senior Checkmate officials kidnapped Baiul and forcibly removed what documents refer to only as "the Cybernary chassis."

Less euphemistically, Checkmate dismembered Ivana Baiul, and then provided her cybernetic body parts–to include 30 percent of her skull–to Yumiko Gamorra.

DAILY PLANET

To impress its customer, Checkmate even upgraded the "chassis."

The agency added flight and psionic-blast capabilities modified from the armor of its heralded superhero, Battalion–whose shocking recent death directly resulted from this operation.

The documents do not record why Checkmate mutilated a human being.

Except for the PLA in the mountains, Yumiko's regime and its U.S. alliance is unchallenged in Gamorra.

But at a PLA training camp last week, General Rong offered a theory.

Yumiko, a banker turned president, seeks to open Gamorra to a flood of foreign investment enabled by the end of the Cold War.

And a stubborn guerilla group living in the mountains, Rong assessed, threatens the investment climate.

"Capital is coming," Rong told the Daily Planet.

DAILY PLANET

Checkmate Inspector General Jackson King, formerly known as Battalion, also had a theory, one that pervades a still-classified report obtained by the Daily Planet.

Despite copious evidence of Checkmate's systemic, years-long human rights violations, the report claims metahuman aid to Yumiko Gamorra was a rogue operation.

The person whom the inspector general alleges is the lead rogue has experienced a meteoric rise at the intelligence agency over the past year:

A Checkmate knight named Amanda Waller.

THE *PLANET* GOES *ON,* MR. CHAIRMAN...

DAILY PLANET

CHECKMATE TACTICS MUTILATED METAS

In Gamorra, U.S. Trades Powers For Influence Investigation Was Battalion's Last Stand

By Lois Lane

GAMORRA CITY–For generations, long before the rise of Kaizen Gamorra or his alliance with Washington, Parousian warriors' greatest weapon was the land itself. Invaders and tyrants might hold the coastline of the island formerly known as Parousia. But conquering it would require them to fight through the triple-canopied jungle of the island's interior–and then up a fortified mountain range. The map outlined a geography of power. Kaizen accepted ruling the shore and the bay. But his inability to subdue the interior limited his ambitions for his renamed "Republic of Gamorra."

"...WALLER'S RISE IS INDEED NOTEWORTHY. IN ONLY A YEAR, SHE WENT FROM COMMANDING A REMOTE *CHECKMATE* BASE IN AFGHANISTAN...

"...TO PLAYING A CENTRAL ROLE IN ONE OF THE MOST AUDACIOUS OPERATIONS IN AGENCY HISTORY.

"YET WHATEVER INSPECTOR GENERAL KING'S THEORIES, THE FACTS HE DOCUMENTED ESTABLISHED THAT WALLER'S POWER DERIVED FROM ANOTHER.

"***ADELINE KANE,*** A RIVAL OF KING'S AND A POWER CENTER WITHIN CHECKMATE, CONSIDERED THE AGENCY'S LEGISLATED MONOPOLY ON THE METAHUMAN MARKET TO BE RIPE FOR EXPORT, AS A LEVER FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

"KANE'S INTEREST WAS AS MUCH FINANCIAL AS STRATEGIC.

"HER HUSBAND, ***SLADE WILSON,*** OPERATES DS LOGISTICS, A MAJOR CHECKMATE CONTRACTOR...

"...AND THE FIRM THAT SADDLED BAIUL, ITS EMPLOYEE, WITH SO MUCH WORKPLACE DEBT THAT IT ***TRAFFICKED*** HER TO CHR."

CRAVEN

WALLER

KANE

WE *KEEP* ENDING UP *BACK HERE,* MS. KANE. THIS IS THE *THIRD* HEARING WE'VE HAD TO HOLD OVER YOUR METAHUMAN EXPERIMENTS.

DIRECTOR CRAVEN, WAS *INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS* PART OF THIS?

NO, SENATOR. TITLE 50 EXPRESSLY PROHIBITS I.O. FROM USING METAHUMANS.

CHECKMATE, IN ITS TITLE 10 AUTHORITIES, IS THE ONLY AGENCY WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY THAT CAN.

NOW, ADELINE MAY HAVE *SWERVED INTO* I.O.'S *LANE...*

...BUT MAYBE THAT JUST SHOWS IT'S TIME TO *RETHINK* THE METAHUMAN PROHIBITION.

MR. CHAIRMAN...

...GAMORRA WAS *MY OPERATION.*

VALLER

CUPERTINO HUMAN RESOURCES DID NOT TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THE PREVIOUS CYBERNARY PILOT. WE THOUGHT THOSE PILOTS SIMPLY MADE SURE THE CHASSIS WORKED.

IT WAS A SERIOUS ERROR, AND THEY WILL NO LONGER BE CHECKMATE SUB-CONTRACTORS.

WALLER

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL PLACED BISHOP KANE ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE WEEKS AGO.

IF IT ***WAS*** HER OPERATION, ITS AUTHORITIES WOULD HAVE ***EXPIRED*** UPON HER LEAVE.

REINSTATING THEM WOULD, OF COURSE, REQUIRE ***A RECORDED VOTE*** OF THIS COMMITTEE.

KANE

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

I'M SORRY, MS. WALLER...

...I ***RESPECT*** YOU TAKING RESPONSIBILITY, BUT LET'S BE ***REAL*** HERE.

METAHUMAN ENHANCEMENT IS BISHOP KANE'S SIGNATURE. SOME MIGHT SAY ***OBSESSION.***

SHE WASN'T ***INVOLVED?*** THE *DAILY PLANET* SAYS HER ***HUSBAND,*** THE ***PRIME CONTRACTOR,*** IMPLICATED HER!

DAILY PLANET

I'M HER DEPUTY BECAUSE WE ***AGREE,*** SENATOR.

THE *DAILY PLANET* HAS ITS SPIN. BUT IT WAS MY INITIATIVE.

BATTALION WAS RIGHT.

YES, IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO *MENTION* THE *NATIONAL HERO* WHO *DIED* IN THE COURSE OF YOUR OPERATION.

IF IT *WAS* YOUR OPERATION.

SENATOR...

...EVERYONE AT CHECKMATE MOURNS COMMANDER KING. BATTALION WAS MORE THAN A HERO. HE WAS A SYMBOL.

THAT MADE IT PAINFUL FOR US TO SEE HIM PURSUE *VENDETTAS* AS INSPECTOR GENERAL.

NOT EVERYONE HOLDS THE JOB THEY *SHOULD.*

ZZZZZZ

THANK YOU, BISHOP KANE. I'M SATISFIED.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE'VE BARELY--

TOM. THE OTHER LADY TOOK RESPONSIBILITY.

CHAIRMAN

BISHOP KANE, MS. WALLER, THIS COMMITTEE *CANNOT* READ ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS IN THE NEWSPAPER. CAN'T HAPPEN.

THE OTHER BUSINESS. WITH THE GIRL. THAT CAN'T HAPPEN EITHER.

BUT I HOPE THAT ONCE THE *PRESS* MOVES ON, WE CAN RECOGNIZE THAT YOU DID SOMETHING *BIG* HERE, ADELINE.

YOU TOO, MS. WALLER. JUST LIKE YOU SAID.

"GAMORRA WILL *SECURE* THE ASIAN MARKETS. MAYBE EVEN *CHINA* SOMEDAY. HELL, WITH THE RUSSKIES OUT OF THE WAY, IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD.

"WE'RE *ADJOURNED.*

"BISHOP KANE, MS. WALLER, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE."

CHAIRMAN

CAN I JUST SAY HOW *LONG* I HAVE HELD BACK THE *URGE* TO SIC SLADE ON WYDALL. BUT TURNS OUT--

--THIS WAS *SO* MUCH BETTER!

THOUGH WHO DO I SIC ON *SLADE* FOR RATTING ME OUT TO *KING*...

HEY. LISTEN. I'M NEVER GOING TO FORGET YOU TOOK THIS BULLET FOR ME.

I *KNOW* THE PAPER SMEARED YOU. BUT PEOPLE FORGET THESE THINGS. YOU WATCH, *OLLIE NORTH* IS GOING TO HAVE A *TV SHOW* ONE DAY.

MAYBE IF THE REPORTER WROTE IT THE WAY KING *WANTED*, YOU'D BE IN TROUBLE.

BUT SHE'S MAD AT "THE SYSTEM," SO I WAS THE BIGGER BAD GUY.

HERE. MAYBE THINK OF IT LIKE *THIS*.

I KNOW YOU LIKE TO TELL PEOPLE THAT GAMORRA AND YUMIKO WERE YOUR IDEAS.

NOW YOU HAVE THAT IN THE COMMITTEE RECORD.

GIMME ONE OF THOSE.

GOOD GIRL.

IT STINGS NOW, I KNOW, BUT I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU.

WE'RE GOING TO SEE THE ***WEATHERMAN.*** RIGHT NOW.

WE DID A ***HISTORIC*** THING IN GAMORRA. AND IT'S TIME WE GOT REWARDED.

FLAVOUR

TRICKY LUCK

CIGARETTES

YOU MIGHT BE ***RUNNING*** CHECKMATE BY THE END OF THE DAY.

I MIGHT EVEN BE ***WEATHERMAN-IN-WAITING.***

SHELBY, VIRGINIA.

OH GOOD. THEY'RE HERE TO GREET US.

ADELINE, SO LOVELY TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

MOLLY, IT'S BEEN TOO LONG. ANGIE, SO GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO.

MS. WALLER, I'M ***MOLLY PERKINS.*** I'M THE CHIEF OF ANALYSIS ON SKYWATCH.

MS. SPICA AND I ARE HERE TO GET YOU ABOARD.

I'M SORRY, ABOARD? ***ABOARD*** A ***SATELLITE?***

YOU'LL BE AMAZED. THE TRIP UP TO SKYWATCH GOES FASTER THAN YOU'D EXPECT.

CHECKMATE HAS ***ASTRONAUTS*** N--

NOT QUITE.

THIS IS *MAJESTROS.* HE'LL BE FERRYING US 22 MILES *THAT* WAY.

BUT...

IT'S NOT *EXACTLY* 22 MILES. ONCE WE GET POSITIONING TELEMETRY FROM SKYWATCH, WE'LL CALCULATE A FLIGHT TRAJECTORY INTO GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT.

EITHER WAY, SMOKE NOW, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T WHEN WE'RE ON SKYWATCH.

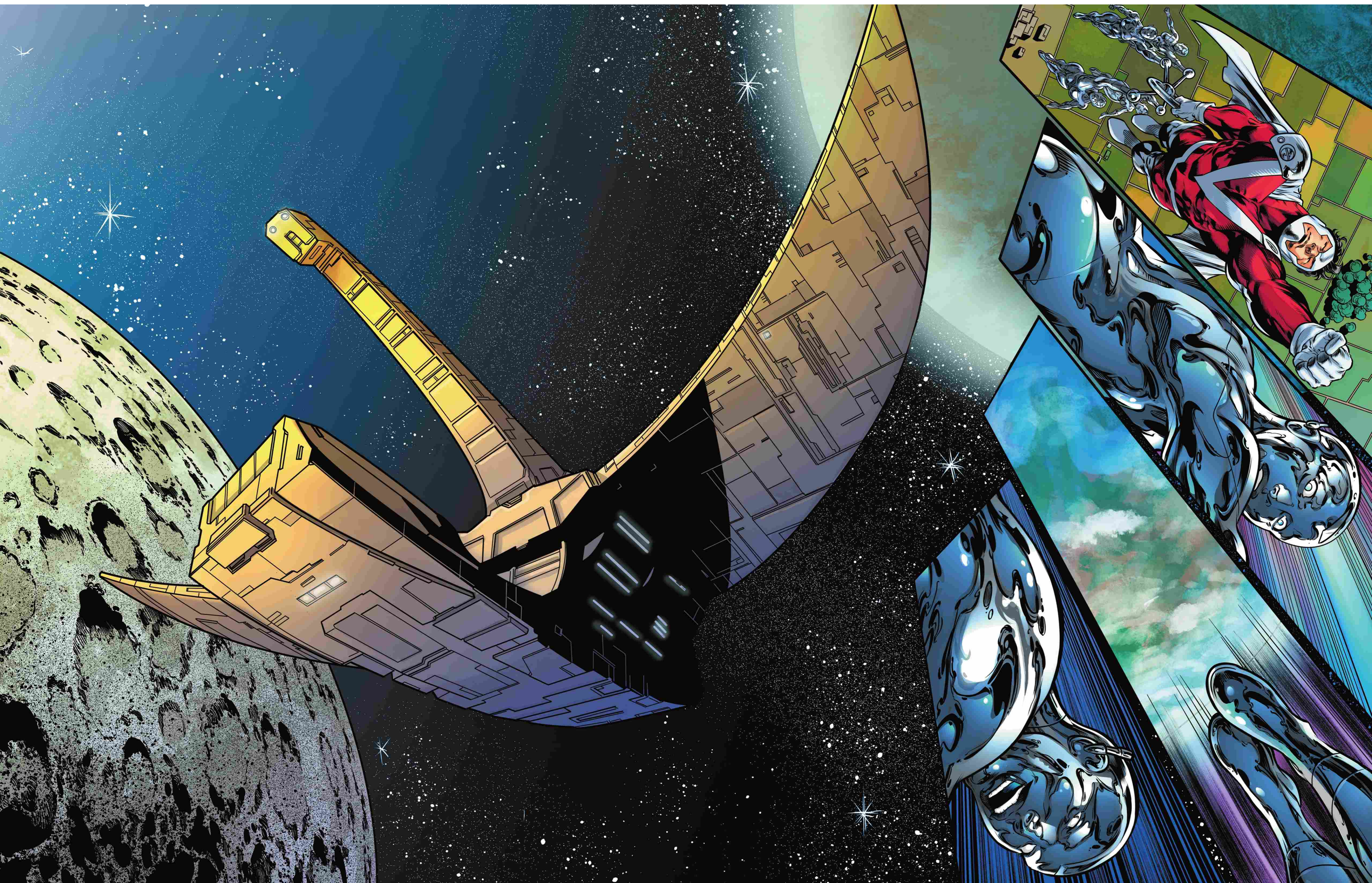
BUT...

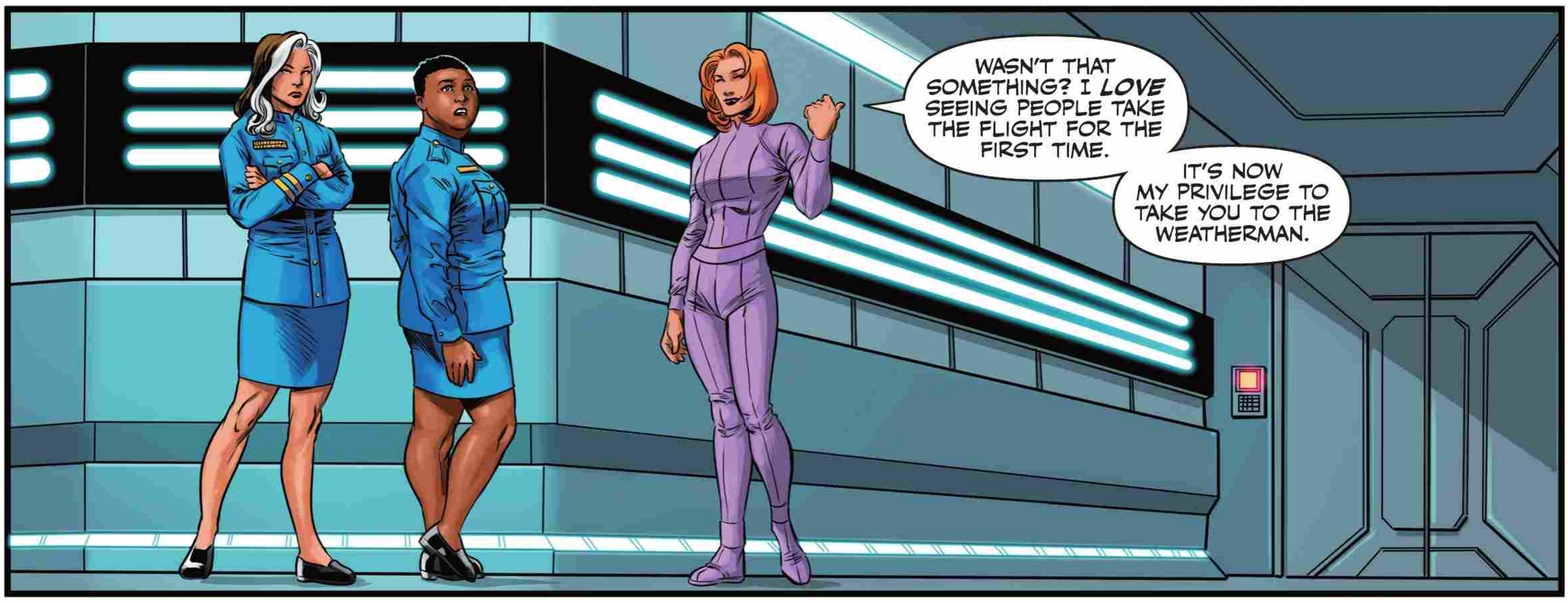
...AND THE *COATING* WILL ACTIVATE. IT CAN WITHSTAND VACUUM PRESSURES AND EXTREME COLD, AND IT'S ALREADY STORED UP ENOUGH OXYGEN TO LAST THE TRIP.

THERE'S NO TIME TO SMOKE. THIS IS THE IGNITION KEY FOR SOMETHING ANGIE ENGINEERED FOR NEAR-SPACE TRAVEL.

PUT THIS IN YOUR EAR, PRESS IT UNTIL YOU HEAR THE CLICK...

I PROMISE, IT'LL BE OVER BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.




WASN'T THAT SOMETHING? I *LOVE* SEEING PEOPLE TAKE THE FLIGHT FOR THE FIRST TIME.
IT'S NOW MY PRIVILEGE TO TAKE YOU TO THE WEATHERMAN.

THIS IS OUR WATCH HALL. I *SHOULD* BE MAKING THEM SALUTE, BUT THAT'S NOT HOW WE DO THINGS HERE.
ADELINE'S HEARD ME SAY THIS, BUT WE COLLECT DATA FROM EVERY SATELLITE IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS *AND* GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT. THERE'S *NOTHING* WE CAN'T GET.
SO WHILE CHECKMATE PERFORMS *TAILORED* ACCESS OPERATIONS BELOW, UP HERE, WE DO *WHOLESALE* ACCESS.
OH, I FORGOT TO MENTION...

...MILES CRAVEN IS GOING TO BE IN THIS MEETING. I WASN'T SURE IF YOU WERE AWARE.

YOU'RE SWEET TO MENTION IT. BUT THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY TIME I WANT CRAVEN IN MY PRESENCE.

BUT... IF CRAVEN WASN'T WITH US...

HE TOOK A DOOR. A PORTAL.

IT'S MACHO BULLSHIT. THEY NEED TO MAKE US FLY ONTO SKYWATCH OR THEY DON'T RESPECT US.

AMANDA.

FOLLOW MY LEAD IN THERE.

LADIES, THIS MEETING IS ABOVE MY PAY GRADE...

...AND THE WEATHERMAN ONLY SEES CLEARED PERSONNEL.

THANK YOU, DR. PERKINS. ADELINE, IT'S BEEN TOO LONG. WHAT A TRIUMPH YOU HAVE ENGINEERED.

AND I UNDERSTAND IT'S YOUR VICTORY, TOO, MS. WALLER.

MAJESTROS I KNOW YOU'VE MET, AND OF COURSE MILES HERE. DO YOU KNOW HIS EXCELLENCY, KAIZEN GAMORRA?

NO-- AH, WE--

--OH, AH, HELLO--

--IT'S AN HONOR, SIRS.

PLEASE RELAX, WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE.

I DOUBT THE SENATE IS ABLE TO ***CONCEPTUALIZE*** WHAT YOU'VE ACHIEVED. BUILDING ON KAIZEN'S ***STURDY*** FOUNDATION, GAMORRA WILL GIVE US FINANCIAL CONTROL OF THE EAST ASIAN MARKETS.

WE'LL BE EVERYWHERE FROM SEOUL TO THE HIMALAYAS. THE PACIFIC OCEAN IS NOW AN AMERICAN LAKE.

ALL THE FOCUS IS ON MOSCOW AND THE QUESTION OF EASTERN EUROPE.

BUT YOU SAW THAT EUROPE CONTAINS THE SPIRIT OF THE ***TWENTIETH*** CENTURY, AND ASIA THE SPIRIT OF THE ***TWENTY-FIRST.***

YOU HAVE ENSURED IT WILL BE AN ***AMERICAN*** CENTURY.

THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN IT FEELS LIKE HISTORY IS OPEN FOR THE TAKING. IT WAS AN HONOR TO HELP A VISIONARY LEADER LIKE YOUR DAUGHTER, EXCELLENCY.

YUMIKO A ***VISIONARY?*** BAH.

INTERESTING! YOU DON'T THINK SO?

MY DAUGHTER RESPECTS NEITHER THE MOUNTAINS OF GAMORRA NOR THE PEOPLE SHELTERED BY THEM.

SHE CAN CONQUER THEM, BUT THEY WILL NEVER STAY CONQUERED. NOW SHE IS YOKED TO SUBDUING THEM FOREVER.

PLEASE DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND ME. CHECKMATE'S PLAN IS FLAWLESS. YOU SHOULD ENJOY YOUR VICTORY.

YUMIKO DOES NOT SEE THAT SHE HAS MADE HERSELF ***DEPENDENT*** UPON CHECKMATE. THE PEOPLE, GIVEN TIME, WILL FIND THE FLAWS IN HER ENHANCEMENTS.

WHAT ELSE CAN SHE DO BUT COME TO CHECKMATE FOR ***MORE?***

YOU WERE ***WISE*** TO EXPLOIT HER.

SHE BELIEVES HERSELF UNBOUND BY HER HISTORY. SHE IS LIKE ***YOU*** IN THAT RESPECT.

THOUGH SHE HAS LEFT YOU WITH A PROBLEM, I UNDERSTAND...

HIS EXCELLENCY REFERS TO A POINT WE WERE DISCUSSING EARLIER. YOUR PLAN WAS SO ELEGANT, ADELINE, THAT IT EXPOSED AN INTERNAL ENEMY WE MUST NOW DEAL WITH.

STORMWATCH.

BATTALION IS DEAD. MS. WALLER, WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST WE DO WITH HIS DISOBEDIENT FRIENDS?

...

I WOULD GIVE STORMWATCH TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

BREAKING UP THE TEAM WOULD ONLY *INCREASE* THE DANGER FROM EACH OF THEM, SINCE THEY'D HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE. THEY WOULD SEE THE U.N. AS A CLEAN BREAK FROM YOU THAT PUTS THEM UNDER A *HIGHER* AUTHORITY.

YES...

THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT THE U.N. WILL BE AN *ADJUNCT* OF AMERICAN POWER, RATHER THAN A *CONSTRAINT* ON IT.

SHOULD THERE BE A U.S.-U.N. CONFLICT, I'M SURE THE PEOPLE ABOARD THIS SATELLITE WILL MAKE CLEAR TO STORMWATCH EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE ON THE FOOD CHAIN.

YES. THAT'S JUST--OH! *EXACTLY!*

ADELINE, WHERE DID YOU *FIND* HER?

JUST ONE YEAR AGO, AMANDA HERE WAS AN ANALYST IN ONE OF MY BLACK SITES. SHE SHOWED ME CONNECTIONS NO ONE ELSE WAS MAKING. WE HIT IT OFF FROM THERE.

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE ALL THIS WITHOUT HER.

YES, *ABOUT* THAT...

THE PLAN WAS GREAT. NO ONE DISAGREES WITH THAT. BUT THIS WAS *INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS'* TURF.

YOU *KNOW* ME, ADELINE. I DON'T *LIKE* TO GET TERRITORIAL. EVERYTHING'S A *GREAT TEAM WIN.*

BUT U.S. RELATIONS WITH HIS EXCELLENCY HAVE BEEN AN I.O. MATTER SINCE BEFORE THERE *WAS* A CHECKMATE.

MILES, YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE.

YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT I.O. WILL BE A *FULL PARTNER* ON THE *YUMIKO GAMORRA* PORTFOLIO.

THAT'S A GOOD PLACE TO TURN TO OUR BUSINESS. WE NEED TO LEAVE THIS TABLE HAVING *RESTRUCTURED* THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

MAJESTROS?

IT'S THE *DAEMONITES,* LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

MANY OF YOU KNOW I'M FROM A PLANET CALLED *KHERA,* WHERE WE'VE BEEN AT WAR WITH THE DAEMONITES FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

LAST MONTH, SKYWATCH PICKED UP SOME ANOMALOUS READINGS. AN ENERGY FLUCTUATION OVER ANTARCTICA.

ONE THAT MATCHED A FLARE-UP IN 1980. FROM AN INTERSTELLAR *INCURSION.*

THIS IS OUR COLD WAR DIVIDEND, PEOPLE.

THESE DAEMONITES MEAN TO MAKE US A STAGING GROUND FOR THEIR EONS-OLD INTERDIMENSIONAL WAR.

ARE WE CONFIGURED, INTERNALLY, TO COUNTER THINGS LIKE THAT? YOUR *TURF DISPUTE,* I THINK, SHOWS WE'RE *NOT.*

YOU KNOW, I BROUGHT THIS UP--OBVIOUSLY, NOT THE THING ABOUT THE ALIENS--

--BUT I BROUGHT UP I.O.'S LACK OF AUTHORITY TO DEPLOY METAHUMAN ABILITIES IN THIS MORNING'S HEARING, AND PERHAPS--

YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS.

HENRY, THIS ALIEN MEANS TO *USE* YOU FOR HIS *DISTANT WAR.*

HE SAYS SOME WAVE FLUCTUATIONS RESEMBLE SOME OTHER WAVE FLUCTUATIONS AND YOU'RE READY TO USE SKYWATCH AGAINST THOSE HIS PEOPLE ONCE OPPRESSED?

NOW LOOK HERE--

MAJESTROS, PLEASE.

EXCELLENCY, I RECOGNIZE THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS REVELATION. BUT IF THERE IS EVEN A *ONE PERCENT CHANCE--*

HENRY, FOR ALL WE KNOW, THIS WAR OCCURRING UNTOLD LIGHT YEARS AWAY COULD HAVE ENDED BEFORE ANY OF US WERE BORN.

--IF THERE IS EVEN A ONE PERCENT CHANCE, THEN WE ARE *OBLIGATED* TO TREAT IT AS A CERTAINTY.

I'VE SEEN WHAT THESE DAEMONITES DO. THIS ISN'T *HYPOTHETICAL* FOR ME.

I MEAN NO DISRESPECT, MR. MAJESTIC. YOU ARE A PATRIOT AT WAR. YOU DO AS YOU MUST.

IN THESE AMERICANS, YOU HAVE CERTAINLY FOUND KINDRED SPIRITS. IT IS NOT FOR ME TO INTERFERE IN YOUR AFFAIRS.

HE HAS NO OTHER OPTION, EXCELLENCY. IT DOESN'T *MATTER* WHETHER THE DAEMONITES ARE GOING TO INVADE OR NOT. IT'S NOT ABOUT OUR ANALYSIS, OR FINDING A PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE.

A WEATHERMAN *ACTS.*

PERFECTLY PUT, ADELINE. WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ADJUST TO THIS NEW REALITY.

IT'S TIME WE INTEGRATE I.O. AND CHECKMATE.

BREAK DOWN THE WALL ENTIRELY. NO MORE META PROHIBITIONS ON I.O. WE SELL THAT TO THE HILL IN RETURN FOR NO MORE CHECKMATE, AH, ESCAPADES ABROAD. ONE SEAMLESS COMMUNITY.

NO MORE ARCHAIC RULES FOR A COLD WAR THAT DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE. BUT WE KEEP CHECKMATE'S *CIVIL RIGHTS* MANDATE. WE *DRAPE* I.O. IN IT.

ADELINE, IN RECOGNITION OF A JOB WELL DONE, YOU WILL LEAD CHECKMATE INTO THIS NEW ERA.

YOU WILL REPORT TO MILES, OF COURSE.

WHAT?

I.O. IS NATURALLY THE BUREAUCRATIC PARENT. IT ONLY MAKES SENSE.

I *DELIVERED* THE *WESTERN PACIFIC* TO THIS COUNTRY. *FORTY YEARS* OF COLD WAR COULDN'T DO THAT. I DID IT IN *ONE.*

AND YOU EXPECT *ME* TO *TAKE ORDERS--*

THAT IS *EXACTLY* WHAT I EXPECT, ADELINE.

NOT AN *OUTBURST* OVER A *PROMOTION.*

THIS *HONORS* YOUR ACHIEVEMENT IN GAMORRA.

IT'S NOT HER ACHIEVEMENT.

IT'S MINE.

YOU TREACHEROUS--

BISHOP KANE'S INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN CHECKMATE WAS CRUCIAL. THAT'S TRUE.

BUT SHE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE A SUBJECT METABOLIZE AND CONTROL THE ENHANCEMENT. UNTIL I SHOWED HER MY DATA.

I CULTIVATED YUMIKO GAMORRA. ADELINE WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH HER.

WITH THE ISLAND. ITS STRATEGIC *IMPORTANCE.*

THESE ARE VERY SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS. ADELINE, WHOSE OPERATION WAS GAMORRA?

HENRY. THIS IS INSANE.

SHE WAS AT A ***BLACK SITE*** WHEN I FOUND HER, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

THE MISSION WAS WHAT MATTERED. THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH IT WAS TO LET BISHOP KANE THINK IT WAS HER IDEA.

THINK IT THROUGH, ADELINE.

IT'S WHAT YOU HAD ME PUT IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE RECORD THIS MORNING.

AND NOW THAT I SEE THIS NEW THREAT, FROM THE DAEMONITES...

...IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO STAY SILENT.

NO PASSIVITY IN THE FACE OF DANGER FROM *YOU,* MS. WALLER.

HENRY! YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY ***BUY*** THIS PERFORMANCE?!

WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY THIS DAEMONITE THREAT IS PROVING TO BE.

BUT IN TRUTH, MY DAUGHTER NEVER MENTIONED THE WHITE WOMAN TO ME.

ALL RIGHT. WE DON'T WANT THIS MEETING TO BECOME ***UNPRODUCTIVE.***

MAJESTROS, WHY DON'T YOU FLY CHECKMATE'S NEW QUEEN BACK TO HER OFFICE?

EXPERTLY DONE, MS. WALLER. NOW I SHALL BE THE NEXT INTO SPACE.

TERRESTRIAL DESTINIES ARE NOT FOR ***KAIZEN GAMORRA.***

YUMIKO MAY RULE MY ISLAND AS AMERICA HUNTS DEMONS.

I SHALL MASTER THE ***COSMOS.***

HENRY, YOU ARE LIKE MY DAUGHTER. NEITHER OF YOU LISTEN, AND BOTH OF YOU MUST HAVE EVERYTHING THERE IS.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WILL PROSPER FOR AS LONG AS YOU HAVE OTHERS TO EAT. FAREWELL.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ***INSIGHT,*** YOUR EXCELLENCY. MAY OUR PATHS AGAIN CROSS.

NOW, AMANDA...

YOU MENTIONED YOU WERE ABLE TO STABILIZE METAHUMAN IMPLANTATION?

INDEED, SIR. THE BRAIN STEM IS THE KEY. IMPLEMENTATION--

THE BASE OF THE BRAIN. GOOD, GOOD.

I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU AN IDEA OF MINE.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO THE LOUISIANA BAYOU?

...A PRISON.

WELL, ADELINE *SAID* YOU RAN A BLACK SITE, CORRECT?

QUITE THE BRUTALIST BUILDING, I KNOW. BUT THE BAYOU ITSELF IS LOVELY. BELLE REVE IS BUILT ON ONE OF TERREBONE PARRISH'S GRANDEST, UH, ESTATES.

THAT'S-- *THAT'S* WHAT Y'ALL CALLING THEM NOW? A *GRAND ESTATE* WITH A *PRISON* ON IT?

THIS IS A PLACE TO *STOCKPILE* THESE METAS. USING *YOUR* CONTROL PROCESS, WE CAN GENERATE *ASSETS.*

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO DO AGAINST THE DAEMONITES?

HAHAHAHAHA--

HENRY--*HENRY!* DOES SHE THINK YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE HER *WEATHERMAN?*

HAHAHAHAHA--

BUT--BUT *THE WESTERN PACIFIC!* I *DELIVERED* THAT TO THE UNITED STATES!

MILES, THAT'S UNCALLED FOR.

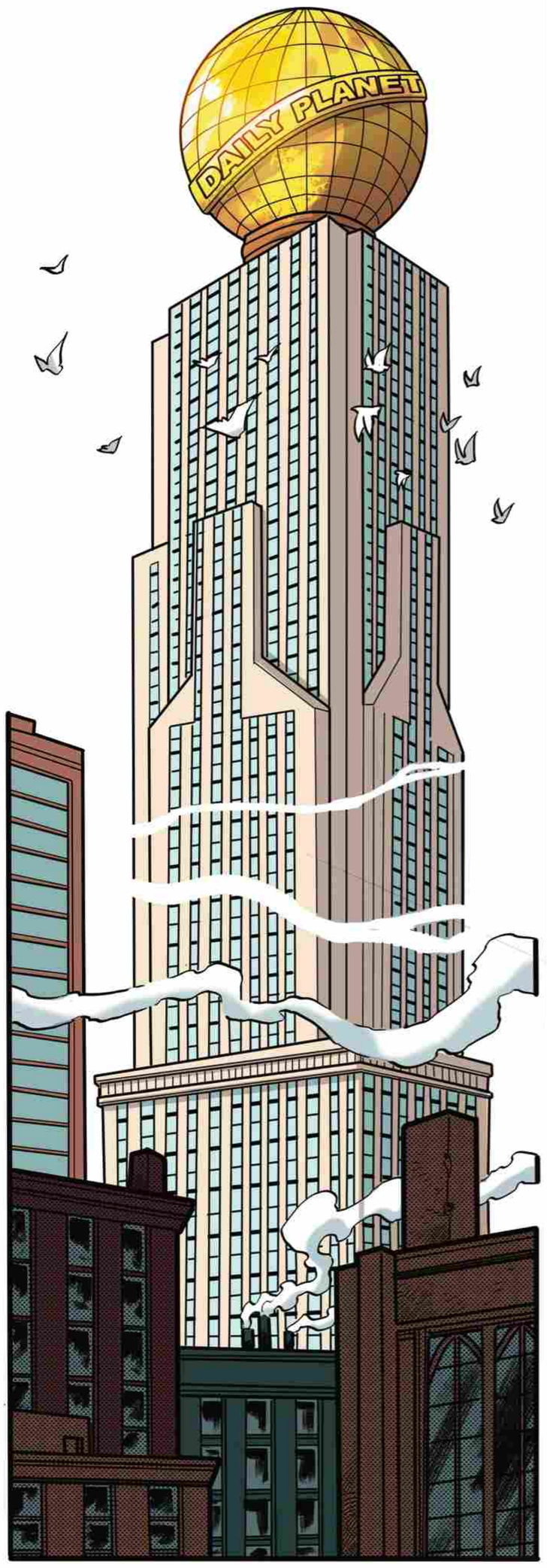
AMANDA, WHAT YOU DID WAS *REMARKABLE.*

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I CAN'T LET YOUR TALENTS GO TO WASTE.

MR. MAJESTIC WILL RETURN SOON TO ESCORT YOU HOME.

THE STARS ARE SUCH A SIGHT FROM UP HERE.

YOU SHOULD SEE THEM WHILE YOU CAN. THE TRIP BACK DOWN GOES FASTER THAN YOU'D EXPECT.



On its own terms, the Gamorra operation succeeded beyond expectation.

Days after Yumiko's eradication of the PLA, she issued a new decree on foreign investment. Major U.S.-chartered corporations have flocked to Gamorra.

But those are not the only terms for understanding what Checkmate has done.

MS. LOIS LANE
DAILY PLANET

It was not possible to locate Ignacio Rivas. Nor could the Daily Planet investigate Yumiko's operation in the mountains, as Gamorra has ceased issuing visas to journalists.

But at the southern edge of Brooklyn, many people love and remember Ivana Baiul.

As a child, Ivana was one of thousands who immigrated from Ukraine to Brighton Beach in the 1970s.

She was a chess champion. Three years in a row, Abraham Lincoln High School chartered a yellow bus to take her to the statewide tournament in Albany.

Unable to afford college, Ivana took a job with a defense contractor, DS Logistics, that promised high-paying work in exciting locales.

DS Logistics neglected to mention that it would charge Ivana a recruitment fee. Once in a country like Gamorra, according to a source familiar with the arrangement, DS would pay its workers the local minimum wage.

Caught in a debt trap, thousands of miles from home, Ivana wrote to her parents not to worry.

DS told Ivana about Cupertino Human Resources, according to a letter to her parents viewed by the Daily Planet. “Within a year, I can pay off my fee and come home,” she wrote them.

That was the last Ivana’s parents heard from her.

Like most people, her parents, Larysa and Andriy Baiul, vaguely knew Checkmate from the news. Gamorra was a mere dot on the map until it was their daughter's return address.

Upon hearing of the geopolitical gambit that sacrificed his daughter, Andriy said that while he loved his new home, he expected no justice from its intelligence agencies.

"We are not people to those who would play with history," he told the Daily Planet.

"They could not live with themselves if we were."

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“Mr. Chairman...

“...Gamorra was MY operation.”

In the late 1980s, as the Cold War begins to thaw, a new battle heats up…for the soul of the intelligence agency Checkmate. As the agency’s super-heroic public face, Jackson King—a.k.a. the armored Battalion, former leader of Stormwatch and the symbol of American might—has long suspected that Adeline Kane is up to dirty tricks overseas, engineering horrors that betray everything he believes about service to one’s country. But King doesn’t know that Kane has a clever new ally—an ambitious young woman named Amanda Waller. She has her own ideas about how metahumans can serve their country. And honor, dignity, and long lives don’t factor into them…

National-security reporter Spencer Ackerman (the *Nation*, *Reign of Terror*), comics and video game writer Evan Narcisse (*Black Panther*, *Spider-Man: Miles Morales*, *Batman: Gotham Knights – Gilded City*), and veteran artist Jesús Merino (*Justice League*, *Wonder Woman*) celebrate WildStorm’s legacy of espionage-flavored superhero morality plays, pitting Stormwatch against the deadliest people in the DCU—including Deathstroke himself!

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